DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 101 656 IR 001 441

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TITLE	Standing Rock Tribal Library. Statement at the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science Mountain Plains Regional Hearing, September 18, 1974, Denver, Colorado.
INSTITUTION	National Indian Education Association, Minneapolis, Minn.; Standing Rock Tribal Library, Fort Yates, N. Dak.
SPONS AGENCY	National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, Washington, D. C.
PUB DATE	18 Sep 74
NOTE	20p.; For related documents see IR 001 438-444
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*American Indians; Federal Aid; Federal Programs; *Financial Support; Information Services; Libraries; Library Programs; *Library Services; National Programs; *Reservations (Indian)
IDENTIFIERS	National Commission on Libraries and Information; Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

ABSTRACT

In the first section of this two part document a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, who is also coordinator of the tribal library, describes her own education and experiences, the present conditions on the reservation, and the programs of the tribal library. She delineates the differences between the library needs of the tribal community and those of the majority culture, the special needs of the community library, and the generally poor support for reservation library services. Her recommendations to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) include active participation of Indians in governmental institutions such as NCLIS, and state and federal funding for library and information services for Indians. In the second section of the document the president of the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) describes a demonstration library project based on the cooperation of three tribes--one of which is the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe mentioned above--and lists nine statements from a NIEA annual report on the present situation, needs, and problems of library services to Indians. He further describes the tangled and inadequate funding of such services and recommends that NCLIS provide direct and adequate financial support. (LS)

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STATEMENT OF

MARGARET TEACHOUT, ACTING COORDINATOR

STANDING ROCK TRIBAL LIBRARY

I. Personal Background and Introduction

I am Margaret Teachout, an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. I am serving my people as the Community Library Specialist and Acting Coordinator of the Standing Rock Tribal Library which is located on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

This paper represents my own views, those of the Standing Rock Tribal Library staff, and many of the approximately 5,000 members of my tribe currently living on the reservation. This paper, however, does not pretend to represent all of the enrolled members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of which another 4,200 live off the reservation, nor does it necessarily reflect the views of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council.

The purpose of my comments is to share with you many of my experiences and observations regarding the past and current lack of library and information services on my reservation as compared to the relative abundance of similar services in the non-Indian communities where I and my family have lived. Through this testimony, I hope to bring to your attention many of the yet unmet needs of my community.

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II. Growth of Personal Interest in Library and Information Service

Throughout my youth while attending Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and in other states, it was my unfortunate experience much like that of other Indian students, not to have access to nor the benefit of materials about my Indian heritage. Indian teachers and other school personnel were missing. And we were physically punished when caught speaking our own native languages. Needless to say we suffered severely from the lack of such vital survival skills and information. While I was fortunate to have been raised in a traditional family where the ways of my ancestors were daily practiced, many of my Indian friends could not fall back on similar supporting life styles and beliefs because their families had died before they were able to transmit their language and customs. When engulfed by the dominant culture and punished without forethought, many students soon forfited what remained of their heritage.

Following my second marriage (which was to a non-Indian), I began living in many non-Indian communities where I was suprised to find information about my people in libraries. There was also an abundancy of life coping information there which had never been available on my reservation. Until 1972, only one library had existed on the reservation and that one was located in the Fort Yates BIA high school. Unfortunately is was not open to the community.

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Upon returning to Standing Rock in the late 1960's I was forced to get reading material from communities off the reservation. In 1967, when I began working as an aide in the Fort Yates High School Library, I hoped to find many good things. However, soon I discovered much to my horror that only a handful of books on Indians were available, and those that were there seemed to be written for small children.

As time went on, young people who had received their formal education in non-Indian schools off the reservation began returning to Standing Rock to help plan for a better future. Two of my sons were among those first to return. David Gipp, the current Director of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium in Denver, was employed as the Tribe's Director of the Office of Planning and Development. The second of my sons to return, Robert Gipp, is Standing Rock Agency's Adult Education Director and a member of the Standing Rock Community College Board.

All of the young planners deeply sensed the great need for good libraries. With the help of the National Indian Education Association Library Project staff we began in 1971 to survey community needs and set up libraries to meet our needs.

III. Introduction to the StandingRock Sioux Reservation and Some of its Problems

In addition to the lack of library and information

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services to the over 5,000 Lakota and others living on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, many other critical problems daily face us.

The reservation covers a total of 2,332,438 acres; with about one-third of the land in North Dakota and the remaining two-thirds of the land in South Dakota. No bus, train, or plane routes connect the seven geographically isolated Indian communities on my reservation (ie., Fort Yates, Cannonball, and Porcupine in North Dakota, with Bullhead, Kenel, Little Eagle, and Wakpala in South Dakota). Only a sparce network of state and county roads which are in constant need of repair connect the reservation to urban centers. With the exception of Fort Yates, all other communities lie outside this road system. Phones, radio and televisions are rarely found in many of our homes. We're also handicapped by inadequate transportation, sanitation, educational facilities, often are without water and electricity, and are in need of employment. The median family on my reservation brings home less than $3,000.00 annually. This alarmingly low figure is also well below the established national poverty level. We make up over 85% of the yearly unemployment figures for our reservation. Eighty-percent of all our incomes are derived from federal programs, most of which are only temporary and must be reviewed for possible renewal yearly. Nearly three-fourths of my people receive some form of welfare assistance each year. Of those of us who live in the Bullhead District, 90% or more receive welfare during the winter months when we are often isolated by winter storms.

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As of June of this year we have been without the services of a full-time doctor and professional medical staff at the fully equipped Indian Public Service Hospital in Fort Yates. We must travel, therefore, on an average of 80 miles to the nearest staffed hospital. Alcohol and malnutrition are perhaps the two most important health problems facing us.

Due to the inadequate and remote educational facilities for accomodating our increasing number of school age students, over 50% of the ninth grade students who enroll in the Fort Yates Community High School do not graduate. The dropout rates for the remaining six Indian communities are often higher. As for student performance levels, an average of 87% of Indian students at Standing Rock fall below the national average in reading vocabulary, 85% below in arithmetic fundamentals, and 90% below in English and grammar.

IV. Standing Rock Tribal Library

Within two years after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe drew up a contract agreement with the National Indian Education Association to set up libraries on the reservation, many of us were given technical on-site training in the daily operation of a library, headquarters for the Library Project was set up in Fort Yates which is also the center of Tribal government activity, and three branch school-community libraries were established and staffed in the districts of Cannonball, Bullhead and Little Eagle.

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The Tribal Library strives to identify and meet the informational needs of the Indian residents of our reservation by securing accurate information in forms that all can use at times when they want to use them. Unlike traditional libraries, our library is concerned with offering only the most creditable and oftentimes unavailable information. We focus on a wide range of reading level materials; often creating our own print and non-print information in the absence of vital sources and formats in languages which can be easily understood and used in our communities.

Some of the many successful program elements of the Standing Rock Tribal Library include such things as: (1) rapidly increasing circulation in each of our four libraries; (2) the Standing Rock Tribal Library Newsletter, published weekly and delivered free of charge to all reservation residents, provides life coping information such as who to see for help with specific problems, how-to-do-it skills, employment assistance, social, educational and sporting programs, description of Tribal and Agency programs, meetings and elections, book reviews, poetry and others; (3) a weekly 10 minute public service radio broadcast reaches those with similar information who live in isolated areas who would otherwise remain unserved; (4) a Directory of Services Available on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation which was recently published and distributed free of charge to all families on the reservation, provides in one unit basic information on the reservation, its government, programs, businesses, educational and communications programs, etc. Via this service

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we hope to help each person improve his/her life by cutting some of the "white" tape which is so deep on every reservation; (5) SDTB was instrumental in setting up in 1973 a 30 minute public service television program, "Indian Country Today," which is produced by Indians for Indians, and portrays Native Americans many on-going positive concerns and contributions; (6) our videotape unit attempts to record local history as it's being made for use by current and future generations. It enables students to study traditional ways in their calssroom, view themselves and their communities in decision making which affects our lives, records tribal government meetings, is a vital oral history device in transmitting our heritage, customs and language, is used by coaches in improving athletic programs, and is used by the community inorder that they can witness their own growth; (7) reading programs, story hours, film festivals, cultural shows and lecturers, in addition to Lakota arts and crafts classes are additional successful program elements of our libraries.

Major difficulties encountered by the Library Project include some of the following: (1) eventhough the program elements cited above have met with success, too often they have appeared to some traditionalists as being another example of a non-Indian institution being transplanted without strong translation to the local setting (ie., overdue book notices mailed monthly to patrons "jar" our borrowers. A person-to-person approach has proven to be much more successful); (2) the majority culture's definitions of "business-like" and "professional" librarianship are outmoded and devistating within our reservation.

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Training local paraprofessionals on site has allowed us to continue to focus on our own needs and not transplant the needs of another community to our setting; (3) staff problems have resulted from our inability to secure necessary on-going funding. We have written six proposals to various state and Federal Government agencies, however not one of them has been funded this year. Vine Deloria, Jr., an enrolled member of our tribe, eloquently explains this phenomenon in one of the many new books, We Talk, You Listen: [1]

> "We have understood that until the foundations and organization...recognize Indians are an intrical part of American society, we will continue to get nothing (or only left-overs) because we're not a familiar item on your agendas."

Lack of adequate funds has also caused us to eliminate valuable programs, sometimes cease developing our own materials which we cannot secure from publishers and other sources, and even caused internal misunderstandings as unnecsrary frictions developed due to varriations of powers, salaries, and duties when all of us are entrusted with professional responsibilities. Too often our personnel are funded by numerous Tribal manpower programs each having its own guidelines and boards in addition to the Library Project's Board. This uneven staffing by its very nature and imperminancy is at best ineffective and not condusive to the development of common goals and loyalty with the libraries; (4) the lack of easy access to creditable material on the reservation and my people has forced us to devote many man-hours to developing our own resources; (5) and due to the relative newness of our library and its services, many of our own people

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remain resistant to approach us. Home visits are therefore being made to determine their unique needs.

V. Recommended Areas for Future Changes

In my opinion one of the keys to developing and operating successful library and information services in Indian communities will be found in the application of the word "standards." We should not waste valuable time thinking in terms of "higher" and "lower," but rather in "different" attitudinal approaches to reaching our common goal of meeting the unique needs of each of the Indian communities in this country.

Following are my recommendations of things you can do to improve and insure that library and information services are provided to all Indians as our treaty right by the Federal Government:

1. It is imperative that we be visible as well as heard within the Federal Government and its various national commissions and organizations such as the National Commission on Library and Information Science, the Federal Government's main library and information service agency to date. No longer will we wait for another specialist or a government official to tell us what will be good for us and our unborn in terms of services. We have the expertise within us to

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formulate plans and programs on both the national and state levels. We must become an integral part of the decision-making bodies within the B.C.L.I.S.

7. Your board should assist in developing state and federal legislation supporting the fact that library and information services assuming those educational services promised by the Federal Government when they signed the Treaty of 1868 with the Sioux Nation at Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Never again will we then have to be subject to the daily whims and vendettas of those competing for the same crumbs.

8. We must also have new programs and policies which will assure support for daily commitments from the state and national levels to insure Indians receive library and information services, and not more policies unconsciously or otherwise patterned for crises situations only to die the next week. A thorough analysis of every area in which there are problems in delivery of library and information services to Indians needs to be undertaken. Then, through our own Intrepretation of ourselves and the problems, we can assist you in developing and choosing those paths of action which will best be achieved.

V. Closing Remarks

In closing, I would like to leave you with a statement which was made by one of my peoples wisest religious leaders, teachers and poets, Sitting Bull. When speaking on behalf of his grandchildren and those yet to be born in the late 1800's before a

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gathering of his friends and relatives on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, he said:

> "Our minds are again disturbed by the Great Father's representatives...the interpreters and the favorite-nation-chiefs. What is it they want of us at this time?...they are again telling us what they intend to do if we agree to their wishes...We are dying off in expectation of getting things promised us.
>
> "One thing I wish to state at this time is, something tells us that the Great Father's representatives have again brought with them a well-worded paper, containing just what they want but ignoring our wishes in the matter. Our people will not be blindly deceived.
>
> "There are things they tell us that sound good to hear, but when they have accomplished their purpose they will go home and will not try to fulfill our agreements with them." [2]

As our leader, Sitting Bull has spoken in ages past, you of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science have said that you truly wish our participation in developing a nation-wide program to insure improved library and information services to Indians. We have provided you with these things which you have requested. And now, we wait hopefully and yet with much caution for your response and future actions.

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[1] Vine Deloria, Jr. We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf (New York, Dell Publishing Company, 1970), p. 23

[2] Shirley Hill Witt and Stan Steiner, eds. The Way: An Anthology of American Indian Literature (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), pp. 20-21.

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STATEMENT OF

RICK LA POINTE, PRESIDENT

NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The National Indian Education Association has been conducting a Library Project with cooperation of three tribes* for the last three years. As the largest research and demonstration unit in the area of Indian librarianship, I believe the National Commission should have the benefit of the statements published in NIEA's recent annual report.

1. Indian people do make use of library and information services, if available. Data collection indicates use to be equal or in most cases better than the national average. Three areas appear to receive highest use: survival skills, Indian heritage, and school related use.

2. Libraries and librarians lack understanding of how to best serve Indian people. Despite good intentions, librarians are unable to meet Indian information needs because of lack of contact and unfamiliarity with Indian society and culture.

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* St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Hogansburg, New York
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Fort Yates, North Dakota
Rough Rock Community, Rough Rock, Arizona

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3. Indian people have failed to insist on library service because they have not been exposed to it. At each site the Library Project has had to show what library and information service is and what it can do for Indian people. As more are exposed, demand continues to grow.

4. Differences exist among Indian communities and these differences must be reflected in library and information services. Each community served by the Library Project has different goals and world views. No one plan or program of services will be able to meet all Indian needs.

5. Local Indian control and commitment are essential. The success of each site is directly related to the commitment of local leaders and the degree of local input.

6. Materials vitally needed by the communities do no exist or can not be located using local resources. Indian communities are not a good location in which to find selection tools. For this reason Project Media, another project within the National Indian Education Association, was begun this year to collect and evaluate available materials. In addition, locally needed, commercially non-available materials

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must be produced by libraries serving Indian people in a language and format locally useful.

8. Indian personnel are necessary for successful Indian library and information services. Both professional and paraprofessional people are required. It is our opinion, given the small size and isolated locations of Indian peoples, that first priority should be given to training paraprofessional people in their local community.

9. No responsibility for Indian library and information service exists at the present time. We have found state and local governments to be reluctant or prohibited by law from using tax monies to support library and information services on tax free lands (reservations). The Federal Government has no specific program to provide Indian people with library and information service. It could be that the Federal Government is not living up to its treaty obligations to provide health, education, and welfare, including library and information services, to Indian people.

Other people are far more able to discuss the specific information needs of Indian people. I would like to address my remarks to the challenge and opportunity to support

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a program to provide information to Indian people.

As Indian reservation land is held in federal trust, state and local property taxes are not assessed. State and local governments are therefore reluctant to use tax money to support activities in tax free areas, such as Indian reservations. The State of North Dakota, for example, prohibits granting state or federal moneys under state control to non-state chartered governments (ie., tribal councils). Further, western state librarians meeting last year stated they felt they should not be made responsible for serving tax free areas. Obviously, state and local government is not a place to look for support.

The historical locus of support for Indian programs is the Federal Government. At the present time, the Federal Government provides funds for services normally paid for out of state and local tax money. The rationale is that the Federal Government by signing treaties accepted a responsibility to provide health, education, and welfare to Indian people as a partial compensation for acquiring Indian land. Examples of federal support include education, roads, the Indian Health Service, and many other programs.

In the past, four federal agencies have provided minimal support for Indian libraries. The Bureau of

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Indian Affairs supports about 81 professionally staffed libraries in its 218 schools. It also granted around $125,000.00 last year for library materials under its Title II Program. So far as I know, these libraries serve only the school needs in the communities where they exist.

The Office of Indian Education and Revenue Sharing both allow funds to be spent on libraries. Amounts to date have not been significant due to other pressing needs which have higher visibility among tribal councils and education committees.

The Division of Library Programs has supported some demonstration programs, including our own Library Project, under Title II of the Higher Education Act. This program has been the most generous program for Indian libraries ($311,880.00 FY '72), but its goal is research and demonstration not normal operations. We can not look to it as an answer.

ESEA-II ($215,000.00) and LSCA ($298,157.00) monies represent the second and third largest amounts of money spent on Indian libraries. Yet they also represent only .5% of their respective budgets. This figure is equal to our U.S. Indian population percentage--.5%. It seems significant to me that the part of the budget spent on Indians is not higher than the population quotient in

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programs designed to serve the unserved and disadvantaged. Another problem with LSCA and ESEA is that they operate on a trickle down theory through state and local non-Indian government. Often some or all of the funds evaporate before reaching Indian hands. All monies for Indian programs should be spent under Indian control. Finally, LSCA is not designed to work without local matching funds. It is not likely that Indian people will ever voluntarily give up their rights so that such money will be generated. Funds in lieu of local sources of support will have to be provided as a federal treaty responsibility.

The challenge is here. Indian people require a library and information system that meets Indian needs. The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science has a great opportunity to develop and promote a workable long-range program. We, at the National Indian Education Association, stand ready to assist in any way that we can to develop the best possible program. Until such a program is initiated, the National Commission should urge a 5% Indian set aside of all existing library program monies. This would insure funds for spade work to initiate further planning and demonstration programs. It should also result in state agencies spending some of their funds in Indian communities and under Indian control.

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Margaret Teachout
Standing Rock Tribal Library
Fort Yates, North Dakota

Mrs. Teachout will represent the National Indian Education Association whose President, Rick La Pointe, sent the appended testimony. Mrs. Teachout is coordinator of the Standing Rock Tribal Library.

The Sioux reservation covers more than two million acres in two states and has approximately 5,000 people in seven communities. There are few roads, phones, radios or televisions. The median family income is $3,000.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, through a contract with NIEA, set up a headquarters library in Fort Yates with three school/community branches in other areas. NIEA trained the staffs on-site. Services include a free newsletter delivering both information and news, a free directory of reservation services, radio and television programs, video-tape facilities for recording local history and for teaching and traditional story hours, festivals and craft classes.

Difficulties have included resistance to what is interpreted as non-Indian institutionalization, the necessity to retrain staff members who come from other areas, insufficient on-going funding which has meant cut-backs in both program and staff, misunderstandings over responsibilities of the supporting organizations, lack of access to creditable materials and hesitance of the people to come to the library.

Mrs. Teachout recommends to NCLIS:

1. Greater visibility of Indians through participation in national organizations including NCLIS.

2. Legislation to fund services that are the right of Indians by treaty.

3. New programs and policies which include analysis of problems and possible actions by Indians themselves.

Questions

1. What financial and community support lies in the predictable future of the Standing Rock Library?

2. How would you order the expenditure of new funds for your library? Should personnel and the services they perform have priority on funds or do you need most to build your collection of appropriate materials, including those that can be given away freely?

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August 15, 1974

Mr. Frederick H. Burkhardt
Chairman
National Commission on Libraries
and Information Science
Suite 601, 1717 "K" Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Burkhardt,

As requested by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, I am submitting to you the enclosed personal statement on some of the needs of Indian people for improved library and information services.

Sincerely,

Margaret Teachout

Margaret Teachout
Community Library Specialist
and Acting Coordinator
Standing Rock Tribal Library
P.O. Box 117
Fort Yates, North Dakota 58538

Enclosure